



July - August 2001

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MUSEUM DIRECTOR'S NOTES BY JERRY ROUILLARD

A Little Help for Our Friends

When we did our strategic plan a few years ago, we realized we did not need more County owned museums as much as we needed to help Placer County communities build or otherwise acquire their own museums. This realization meant we should become a resource for community museum planning, and we have now had a chance to start doing that for the Rocklin Historical Society.

The Rocklin group recently signed a lease for their new museum, near City Hall. They are making plans for it to become a house museum that focuses on Rocklin history. There are a lot of start up issues that have given us a chance to try out our "community resource" role. We were able to steer them toward early development of a collections policy that will help focus their artifact acquisition. Perhaps even more importantly, we have been able to help them get started on a docent training program by sending our Administrative Curator, Doris Parker, to Rocklin on Monday mornings to teach a three-part overview of Placer County history.

It may seem strange to spend County staff time on another museum's training program, but helping our friends put together a good museum for their community is an excellent investment in

our County's heritage education resources. It helps bring new energy and a new focus to the history of a fast growing community that needs all the help it can get. It helps build local support for presenting history to a population that has grown 93% since 1990.

Besides, it's a nice feeling when you get to help your friends.

MUSEUM VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENT BY DORIS PARKER

The Department of Museums invites all currently active Museum Volunteers to attend the annual Museum Volunteer Appreciation Day, which will be held on Monday, August 20, 2001 from 8:30 AM – 6:00 PM.

This year the event will be held in the Bay Area with lunch at Spenger's in Berkeley, an afternoon tour of the Maritime Museum and historic vessels at the Hyde Street Pier.

The itinerary for the day follows:

- 8:30 AM – Board the Cherokee Line buses at the Jury Parking Lot on Auburn-Folsom Road in Auburn.
- 8:45 AM – Leave Auburn
- 11:00 AM – Arrive at Spenger's for lunch.
- 12:30 PM – Board the buses for San Francisco.

- 1:00 PM – Arrive at the Maritime Museum for a self-guided tour.
- 1:30 PM – Join the tour guide for a two block walk to Hyde Street Pier to tour the fleet of historic ships.
- 3:00 PM – Board the bus to return to Auburn.
- 6:00 PM – Reach Auburn.

The San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park includes the Maritime Museum and a fleet of historic vessels at the nearby Hyde Street Pier.

The Maritime Museum was built to resemble a ship and has portions of seafaring vessels incorporated in its décor. The museum provides panel exhibits, video presentations, oral history re-creations, models, and interactive exhibits on marine topics.

The currently featured exhibit, *Sparks, Waves and Wizards: Communications at Sea*, is billed as an interactive, one-of-a kind Bay Area exhibition that tracks the colorful history of maritime communications, from the hand-held semaphore to orbiting satellite. The exhibit also features a walk-in, authentic recreation of a 1943 Victory ship radio room.

The Park includes over 100 small craft and several larger ships including the 1886 square-rigger, *Balclutha*, the 1895 schooner, *C.A. Thayer*, the 1890 steam ferryboat, *Eureka*, the 1891 scow schooner, *Alma*, the 1907 steam tug, *Hercules*, and the 1914 paddlewheel tug, *Eppleton Hall*.

Our time will allow us to only view a small part of this wonderful collection, but will hopefully whet the appetite for return visits.

Spenger's Fresh Fish Grotto has been an East Bay landmark for over 111 years. The restaurant and fish market has recently reopened after a five million dollar restoration. The restaurant is a museum in itself, displaying maritime memorabilia in all of its dining areas.

We will have lunch in the Atlantic Room. The choice of entrees is Grilled Salmon Fillet with Northwest Berry Sauce and Herb Roasted Half Chicken. The meal includes a salad, a starch side dish, vegetables, fresh bread, dessert, and a choice of coffee, decaf, or hot tea.

Please call Mary-Jane at 530-889-6500 during regular business hours to make your reservations. Only Museum Volunteers, who have volunteered time during the last twelve months, are eligible for this trip. Each volunteer may bring one guest. The reservation deadline is Friday, August 3rd.

MUSEUM VOLUNTEER NEWS BY DORIS PARKER

Welcome to our New Volunteers

The Department of Museums has been fortunate to recruit some wonderful new volunteers in the last few months. We welcome the following new volunteers:

Hap Arnold, Archives; Marina Delfino, Archives; Ann Fenn, Docent; Ruth Holt, Docent; Howard Moore, Archives; Mary Patton, Docent; Aimee Beth Rohrer, Docent; Sandi Tribe, Docent; Jim Wall, Docent; Kathy Whitmore, Docent; and Dianne Wilcoxon, Archives & Docent.

If you are interested in becoming an Archives volunteer, call Carmel Barry-Schweyer at 530-889-7994.

The department's next Docent class will be held in the fall. For information on the Docent Program call Doris Parker at 530-889-6504.

Collections Management Volunteer Program

Alycia Wood, our Curator of Collections has reshaped the volunteer program for the Collections Management Facility. Long time volunteers, Norma Anderson and Barbara Nichols are currently working with Alycia on a Collections Management Facility inventory and on collections organization.

Alycia is currently seeking volunteers who are interested in data entry. Training will be provided. If you are interested in becoming a Collections volunteer, call Alycia at 530-889-7705.

Gold Country Fair Volunteers Needed

The department is seeking volunteers to help staff the Gold Country Museum and to help staff the department's Placer @ 150 booth during the Gold Country Fair. Volunteers in both locations will assist the department staff in providing information on the museum and the museum's services to the public.

The Gold County Fair is being held Thursday, September 6th – Sunday, September 9th.

Volunteers are asked to work a three hour shift. They receive both fair and parking passes. If you are interested in helping out, please call Mary-Jane at 530-889-6500.

MUSEUM EXHIBITS AND PROGRAMS BY DORIS PARKER

The Art of a Sign Painter

Harry de Groat, who lived in Auburn from the 1920's until his untimely death in 1934, left an artist legacy that has never been gathered together for a display until now.

Mr. de Groat earned his living as a sign painter and pursued his avocation as an artist during his leisure hours. His son, Raymond de Groat wrote, *"One may well wonder how he had time to express his love for the Northern California through his landscapes, however. He worked, not the yet to be accepted eight hours per day – 40 hour week, but well into many nights."*

Even today, some of de Groat's sign work may still be seen in the Auburn area. One large mural is located on an exterior wall of the State Theater. A set of three Klumpp signs is part of the Department of Museums' collections.

Raymond de Groat has worked to gather together some of his father's paintings and some photographs of Harry de Groat and his works. The pieces of art found by Raymond de Groat and three paintings now in the Museums' collection will be combined to create a retrospective of Harry de Groat's art.

This display, entitled *The Art of A Sign Painter*, will open as the August Artist of the Month Show at the Placer Arts League Gallery One, located on the top floor of the Bernhard Winery in the Bernhard Museum Complex, 291 Auburn Folsom Road in Auburn.

The exhibit will combine the artwork of Harry de Groat, some of his commercial work, and family memorabilia. This show was created through the combined efforts of Raymond de Groat, the Placer Arts League, and the Placer County Department of Museums. Special thanks are offered to retired Curator Chris Hughes for bringing these parties together for this unique display.

The Art of A Sign Painter will open on August 7th and run through September 30th. For information on this exhibit, please contact the department administrative office at 530-889-6500.

Educational Outreach Boxes

During the years of the state sesquicentennial, the Tahoe National Forest's Nevada County Office, the Placer County Sesquicentennial Committee, and the Placer County Department of Museums came together to develop themes and procure materials for a series of Educational Outreach Boxes that could supplement the Third – Fifth Grade history curriculum.

We are pleased to introduce the first set of Outreach Boxes, which will focus on the rush to California, the early gold camps, and the development of communities in the Gold Country. The five duplicate boxes contain resource material, children's activities, three dimensional items, posters, maps, photographs, and a teacher's user's manual.

For further information on the new outreach boxes call the Museums administrative office at 530-889-6500.

Living History Programs

There is still time to make reservations for the Fall 2001 Docent Guild Living History Program and for the Fall 2001 and the Spring 2002 Discovering Our Heritage Living History Program. If you would like more information on either of these programs, call the Museums Administrative Office at 530-889-6500.

CONTRIBUTE YOUR NEWS ITEM TO THE PLACER

Want to see your organization's events and items of interest listed in *The Placer*? We would welcome your contributions of upcoming events, organizational news, and short articles on historical topics.

The Placer is a bimonthly newsletter edited and published by the Placer County Department of Museums in cooperation with the Placer County Historical Society. We are working to make *The Placer* an information source that serves all of the historical organizations in Placer County.

Please submit all material to Doris Parker at the Placer County Department of Museums. We prefer that you send the information by e-mail or on computer disk, however we will accept written or faxed material. E-mail your material to dparker@placer.ca.gov. Send hard copy to Doris at 101 Maple Street, Auburn, CA 95603. Our fax number is (530) 889-6510. **The deadline for material for the next *The Placer* is June 25, 2001.**

FOLSOM HISTORY MUSEUM HOLDS ANNUAL QUILT SHOW

The Folsom History Museum will hold its 21st annual Antique Quilt Show during the months of August and September 2001. The show will include 40 quilts, period clothing, and photographs.

Among these heritage pieces will be an 1850 *Pomegranates and Dahlias* quilt that was brought to California from Missouri and a *Robbing Peter to Pay Paul* quilt that was made by Cherokee women on a reservation in Hominy, Oklahoma.

The Folsom History Museum will be open seven days a week during this two month show. The museum is located at 823 Sutter Street in Folsom.

WHAT IS NEW AT THE PLACER COUNTY MUSEUM GIFT SHOP BY DONNA HOWELL

We are marking our sixth year in business July 1. Thank you for your support.

The book, *To the Land of Gold and Wickedness* includes the 1848-59 diary of Lorena Hays. Her family came from Illinois in 1853 and she settled in Lone. Her great-grandson, Angus Bowmer, founded the Shakespearean Festival in Ashland, Oregon in 1955.

Hydraulic Mining in California, A Tarnished Legacy by Powell Greenland, features the invention and downfall of this destructive mining system. He states, "In 1879 Col. W.S. Davis installed an Evans Elevator at Mammoth Bar."

A Buckeye in the Land of Gold, Letters and Journal of William Bickham, details his stay at Murderers Bar. It was his camp where Jean Baptiste stayed. Sat. May 17, 1851, "Old

Charbonneau is now with us on the bar and is as full of life and fun as any boy of 18."

Attorney Wendell Peters of hot sauce fame, has added *Legal Rush* coffee beans blended at Depoe Bay, and *Hot Lawyers Nuts* (peanuts) to his line.

Children's tee shirts are on sale. Buy now for your grandchildren for Christmas!!

Hard copies of *Rush for Riches* by J.S. Holliday are on sale at \$35.00.

We still have two copies of *Empire Express* by David Bain, as featured in Walt Gray's talk at the last Placer County Historical Society meeting.

PLACER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY DINNER MEETING WILL BE HELD SEPTEMBER 6TH BY ADDAH OWENS

WHEN: September 6, 2001
(We have changed the date from October 4th)

WHERE: 6:30 p.m. Dinner
7:30 p.m. Program

COST: \$10.00

MENU: Stuffed Pork Loin & Portabello Gravy

MAIL CHECK TO: PCHS, c/o Betty Samson
8780 Baxter Grade Rd.
Auburn, CA 95603

PROGRAM: The speaker will be Loreley Hodkin, with a pictorial display of historical homes in the Auburn area.

HISTORICAL PETALUMA BY ADDAH OWENS

Our bus trip for 2001 is a tour of Petaluma, which was one of California's largest cities in the 1860's, the World's Egg Basket in the early 1900's, the World's Wrist Wrestling capital and home of the Largest Outdoor Quilt Show in California. A substantial amount of Victorian homes and commercial buildings provide a treat for sightseers.

We will depart the Grocery Outlet/Rite Aid parking lot on the corner of Hwy. 49 & Elm Avenue at 8:30 a.m. on August 18, 2001. After a two hour drive through scenic countryside, we will arrive at the Petaluma Adobe State Park, and have coffee and donuts under stately oaks

in a lovely picnic area. The Adobe served as the center of General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo's 66,000 acre working ranch from 1836-1846. Restored to the 1830's-1840's with an educational interpretive display that includes hand tools and weaving equipment, exhibit room, picnic area and animals.

Our next stop will be the River House Restaurant and Gallery where we will dine on Smoked Chicken Penne Pasta, salad, sorbet and ice tea.

We will then travel to the Petaluma Historical Museum and Library. Built in 1904 from a Carnegie Foundation grant, it was the Petaluma Library until 1976 and is now the city's museum.

Our final stop is the Victorian Garden Valley Ranch, home of 8,000 rose bushes, nursery, and fragrance garden. The ranch will delight you with riotous color and a peaceful enclosed garden setting. We will stroll among the incredible blossoms.

Our plan is to arrive back in Auburn at 7:00 p.m.

- COST: \$45.00 (includes all fees, transportation, lunch and driver's tip)

Make checks payable to Placer County Historical Society and mail to:

Addah Owens, Vice President
152 Terry Ln.
Auburn, CA 95603

For further information, my telephone number is: 885-8347.

**PLACER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WEB PAGE
BY BARBARA VAN RIPER, WEB HOST**

Log on to www.placercountyhistoricalsociety.org, and there you can find a list of the PCHS publications and histories. Some of the things you can find include: the story of the Auburn Ski Club; material on Christi Mill, a lumber mill located in El Dorado Canyon in the Foresthill area; a photo from the Gene Scott collection of the Town of Newcastle before the fire of 1900; a newspaper story carried in the George Kellogg paper, *The Newcastle News* about the fire and, various other articles, interviews and historical facts, which may interest you.

We will keep you up to date on the coming events for the society, such as the up-coming Society bus trip to Petaluma. You will find links to other historical societies and areas of interest, such as the Central Pacific Railroad, and State History sites.

Mike Moffett generously volunteered to do the "mechanic" work, as he calls it, for the Society. Mike became involved in electronics in about 1951. In the Navy he specialized in the repair of communications equipment of various types, taught electronic equipment repair and worked as a curriculum developer for the Naval electronics school system. It was a natural step to become involved in microcomputers through this experience.

After his retirement from the Navy in 1974, he worked as a computer programmer and then as an instrument repair technician and general manager of a small manufacturing firm until his retirement from that position in the early 1990's. He and his wife Pat, moved to Foresthill in 1991. They joined the Foresthill Historical Society shortly after and decided to set up a web site for sharing the history of that area with others.

He now collects photographs from individuals, and scans them for the use of the society, returning the originals to their owners. He states, *"When I was given the opportunity to work with the Placer County Historical Society on a web site, I jumped at the chance."*

We are very grateful to him for sharing his expertise on our behalf.

Mike will up-date our site on a regular basis. Check in often and tell your friends to take a look. Any suggestions are welcomed as to items you think would be of interest. Just click on contact Placer County Historical Society and send it to us.

**PCHS NEW MEMBERS
BY BARBARA BURDICK**

The Placer County Historical Society welcomes the following new members: Walter Gray & Mary Helmich of Sacramento, Sue Hughs of Dutch Flat, David & Frances Jones of Auburn, Bill Stevens of Newcastle, Lane & Sandi Tribe of Auburn, and Bill Wilson of Auburn.